

June 29, 2009

225309

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Acting Secretary Quinlan:

Re: STB Ex Parte No. 690.

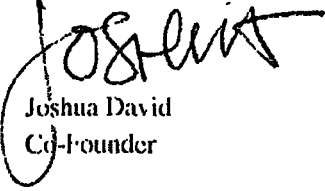
As the Co-Founder of Friends of the High Line, I write today to express my strong support for rail banking and Section 8 (d) of the National Trails System Act. This important trails law has enabled Friends of the High Line and the City of New York to work together to create a new park on a disused elevated rail viaduct that has forever changed the face of New York City and created myriad social and economic benefits.

When Friends of the High Line started its work in 1999, the High Line had been tied up in lawsuits going back to the 1980s. An extraordinary collaborative effort between Friends of the High Line, the City of New York, CSX Transportation, and a group of underlying property owners (which included numerous private property owners, as well as the State and City of New York), resulted in a successful application to the STB for a Certificate of Interim Trail Use, or CITU, granted in 2005. By permitting Interim Trail Use of the High Line, this certificate has provided the regulatory structure that has allowed for the creation of a public park that has been called by the New York Times, "one of the most thoughtful, sensitively designed public spaces built in New York in years.... one that is as singular in its way as standing on the observation deck of the Empire State Building... an invaluable and transformative gift" to the city.

Over 100,000 people have visited the High Line in its first ten days -- a group including neighborhood residents, New Yorkers from across the city, and international visitors. Property values have risen significantly around the new park, generating important new tax revenues for the City of New York. It has become a catalyst for exciting new real estate developments by internationally renowned architects. The powerful appeal of the park has greatly increased foot traffic on the streets below the High Line, which is greatly appreciated by local businesses.

Though it has only been open for a few weeks, it is already clear that the High Line is a valuable legacy that will benefit New York City for decades to come. It would not have been possible without the rail banking program, allowing this priceless railroad corridor to be used in the interim as a recreational trail, instead of being abandoned and lost forever.

Sincerely,



Joshua David
Co-Founder